DOCTOR STRANGE
MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
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170 JULY
NIGHTMARE, THE MONARCH OF MAGICAL MENACE RETURNS!
TO DREAM... PERCHANCE TO DIE!

Dr. STRANGE MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS!™

THAT CRY--LIKE THE MADDENED, MUFFLED OUTBURST OF A SOUL IN TORMENT!
IT CAME FROM THE CHAMBER OF... THE ANCIENT ONE!
AND, WITH THOSE STRANGLED WORDS, THE MAN WHOM THE WORLD CALLS DR. STRANGE RACES SWIFTLY THRU THE MUSTY CORRIDORS OF A DARKENED HIMALAYAN RETREAT--HIS MIND ASSURING HIM THAT HE BUT IMAGINED THE OUTCRY--YET HIS HEART FILLED WITH A NAMELESS, FACELESS FEAR--!

"TO DREAM... PERCHANCE TO DIE!"

PREPARE YE NOW TO SHUFFLE OFF THIS MORTAL COIL AMID WONDERS BEYOND COUNTING, ETHEREALLY ESCORTED BY:

STAN LEE	ROY THOMAS	DAN ADKINS
EDITOR	WRITER	ARTIST

(BUT, IF YOU SEE A SHIMMERING SHADOW NOT FAR BEHIND DON'T WORRY--THAT'S JUST IRVING WATANABE, LETTERER, OUT FOR A MOONLIGHT STROLL!)

MY AGED MENTOR HAS ENEMIES--VENGEFUL FOES WHO KNOW THAT HE IS NOW OLD--AND INFIRM!
COULD ONE OF THEM HAVE ATTACKED HIM--NOW, WHEN HE IS WEAK FROM OUR RECENT BATTLES?
IF SUCH BE TRUE, THAT FOE SHALL PAY--AND PAY DEARLY!
THIS DO I--DR. STRANGE--SWEAR!
BUT, HERE IS HIS ROOM--NOW DARKLY, UNCANNILY SILENT!
WHAT SHALL I FIND...WHEN I PASS THRU THESE PORTALS?
A SINGLE HEARTBEAT LATER, HEEDLESS OF WHAT UNEARTHLY TERRORS MAY LURK WITHIN, THE MYSTIC MASTER ENTERS THE BEDCHAMBER--TO BEHOLD--
THE ANCIENT ONE!
HE LIES SO STILL--AS STILL AS DEATH ITSELF!
COULD IT BE--?
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QUICKLY, HE WHO HAD ONCE BEEN A PHYSICIAN BENDS ANXIOUSLY OVER THE FRAIL FORM OF A MAN OLD BEYOND YEARS...AND WISE BEYOND RECKONING...
THE VISHANTI BE PRAISED!
HE LIVES--THOUGH HE SEEMS IN THE VERY DEEPEST OF SLEEPS--
--A SLUMBER SO DEEP THAT EVEN MY TOUCH DOES NOT AWAKEN HIM!
THEN, IT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN HE WHO CALLED ME--FIRST MENTALLY, THEN ALOUD!
YET, IT WAS HIS VOICE--I KNOW IT!
OR HAS MY WEARINESS ROBBED ME OF MY SENSES?
IT WAS NO MERE ECHO YOU HEARD, DR. STRANGE--BUT TRULY THE ANCIENT ONE!
I, TOO, HEARD HIM!
THAT VOICE! I AM NOT ALONE!
BUT WHO--?
THERE--STANDING IN THE SHADOWS, LIKE SOME LURKING WRAITH--A COWLED FIGURE!
COME FORTH AND IDENTIFY YOURSELF, INTRUDER, OR FACE THE MYSTIC POWERS OF THE ANCIENT ONE'S DISCIPLE!
YOU MAY SAVE YOUR OCCULT SPELLS, DR. STRANGE!
HAVE YOU SO SOON FORGOTTEN... HAMIR?
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NAMIR--MY MENTOR'S EVER-FAITHFUL BODY SERVANT!
SO SHROUDED IN MYSTERY ARE YOUR COMINGS AND GOINGS, THAT I HAD INDEED ALMOST FORGOTTEN YOU, MY FRIEND!
THEN YOU HAVE RETURNED--TO WAIT UPON THE NEEDS OF YOUR MASTER?
YES--RETURNED! BUT PERHAPS ...TOO LATE!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT, MAN?
WE BOTH HEARD HIM CRY OUT--YET NOW HE SLEEPS AS IF NEVER TO AWAKEN!
AND, ONLY MINUTES EARLIER, I HEARD HIM WHISPER AN ALMOST-FORGOTTEN NAME...
THE NAME OF NIGHT-MARE!
NIGHT-MARE!?
THAT PHANTOM FIEND WHO STALKS THE MISTY BYWAYS OF DREAMS?
COULD HE HAVE COME BACK --TO MENACE US ANEW?*
*HE FIRST APPEARED IN STRANGE TALES #110--IN THE VERY PREMIERE OF OUR SPELL-STUDDED SERIES!--SORCERER STAN.

IT'S THE ONLY POSSIBLE ANSWER!
STAND YOU BACK, HAMIR--WHILE I SUMMON MY ENCHANTED CLOAK OF LEVITATION!
IF NIGHTMARE HAS HURLED DOWN THE GAUNTLET OF CHALLENGE DR.STRANGE MUST PICK IT UP!

AND, MOMENTS LATER, WHEN THE MYSTIC CLOAK HAS LIKEWISE TRANSPORTED THE MAGE'S EARTHLY VESTMENTS...
NOW, LET WHAT WILL, BEFALL!
DR. STRANGE STANDS READY!
FIRST, I MUST TRY TO AWAKEN THE MASTER--WITH THE HELP OF THE ALL-SEEING, ALL-KNOWING VISHANTI!
A SPELL? THEN YOU, ALSO, SUSPECT THE EVIL HANDIWORK OF NIGHTMARE?
AY, FAITHFUL ONE!
I SHALL RAISE THE ANCIENT ONE TO A SITTING POSITION, AND THEN--
BY THE SEVEN RINGS OF RAGGADORR!
MY SPELL MEETS WITH RESISTANCE--AS IF SOME UNSEEN SHIELD SURROUNDS HIS MORTAL SHELL!
YET, NOTHING MUST PREVENT ME FROM MAKING PSYCHIC CONTACT WITH THE MIND OF THE ANCIENT ONE!
I MUST CONCENTRATE HARDER... HARDER...
...AND NOW, TO UTTER ONE OF THE MOST POTENT INCANTATIONS OF ALL--!
5.

BY OSHTUR'S FEARSOME VISAGE, 'FORE WHICH ALL THINGS DO SHAKE-- BY HOGGOTH'S HOARY LEGIONS, WHICH BID THE COSMOS QUAKE--
LET ALL VEILS NOW BE LIFTED-- THE ANCIENT ONE AWAKE!!
BUT, THOUGH WONDROUS WAVES OF MYSTIC FORCE FILL THE DARKENED CHAMBER, THERE IS NO ANSWER--SAVE TIMELESS, TAUNTING ECHOES...
MY STRONGEST SPELLS AVAIL ME NAUGHT!
THEN, THERE REMAINS BUT ONE THING UNDONE-- AND THAT I MUST DO!
DR. STRANGE--SURELY, YOU CANNOT MEAN--YOU WOULD NOT DARE--!
I MUST SEEK TO ENTER MY AGED MENTOR'S MIND!
THIS--AND MORE--WOULD I DARE...
...FOR THE SAKE OF HIM WHO HAS BEEN MORE THAN FATHER TO ME!
AND NOW, KEEP EVER-WATCHFUL VIGIL, TRUSTED ONE--
--WHILE DR. STRANGE UNDERTAKES THE MOST FEARFUL, MOST FATEFUL JOURNEY OF ALL!

THEN, THE VERY SHADOWS IN THE DIMLY-LIGHTED ROOM SEEM TO WATCH IN SILENT AWE--AS THE GRIM SORCERER CONJURES UP AN IMAGE--A VISION OF A HUMAN PSYCHE...
BUT SUDDENLY, EVEN AS THE MYSTIC MASTER BEGINS TO CONCENTRATE MENTALLY UPON THE HAZARDOUS TASK BEFORE HIM...
SOME SINISTER, UNEARTHLY FORCE-- STRIKING ME AT THE MOMENT WHEN MY DEFENSES ARE AT THEIR WEAKEST!
IT WAS ALL--A TRAP!
HOW PEACEFUL SEEMS HIS MIND-- HOW UTTERLY AT REST!
YET, WHY CAN HE NOT BE AWAKENED-- UNLESS HE IS TRULY IN THE GRIP OF SOME EVIL SPELL?
AND, WHOEVER SEEKS TO ENSNARE ME--HAS ALREADY GAINED POSSESSION OF THE ANCIENT ONE'S MIND!
I MUST SEND MY ECTOPLASTIC SELF INTO HIS BRAIN-- AND FACE WHATEVER MAY THERE AWAIT ME!

THE NEXT INSTANT, THE PHYSICAL FORM OF THE STRICKEN MAGE COLLAPSES... AS THOUGH STRUCK BY A VIOLENT THUNDERCLAP...
NOW I UNDERSTAND IT ALL!
ONE OF OUR ENEMIES HAS LEARNED THAT I AM MOST VULNERABLE--IN THE MOMENT WHEN MY ASTRAL FORM PREPARES TO LEAVE MY BODY!
THUS, HE CHOSE THAT MOMENT--TO ATTACK!!
BUT THEN, THE LIPS OF STEPHEN STRANGE SPEAK NO MORE--
FOR, SUDDENLY, HIS VERY ESSENCE IS WRENCHED FROM HIS EARTHLY FRAME BY AN OCCULT SPELL, POWERFUL BEYOND ALL IMAGINING--
--AND, IMPRISONED WITHIN A GLOBULE OF LIVING ENERGY, IS PULLED DEEP WITHIN THE ANCIENT ONE'S MIND, THERE TO FACE... WHAT??
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FOR THE ANSWER TO THAT ALL-IMPORTANT QUERY, WE MUST MOMENTARILY RETURN TO THE WORLD OF WAKEFULNESS...
...WHERE, AT THAT SECOND, A FIGURE STIRS...
I'VE WON! I'VE WON!!
I KNEW I COULD TRICK THE FOOL--DEFEAT HIM--IF I PLAYED UPON HIS CONCERN FOR HIS TEACHER!
IN HIS ANXIETY, HE SOUGHT THE DANGER WITHIN HIS MENTOR'S MIND, AND OVERLOOKED THE OBVIOUS--
--THE FACT THAT THE TRUE MENACE STOOD ALL THE TIME AT HIS VERY SIDE!
THEN, REMOVING HIS OUTER VESTMENTS WITH A SINGLE GESTURE, THE VICTORIOUS FOE CALLS OUT TO THE UNHEARING MAGICIAN...
HOW EASILY I COULD DEAL WITH YOU NOW, MORTAL--BY MERELY DISPOSING OF YOUR PHYSICAL BODY--
--LEAVING YOUR ASTRAL SELF TO DRIFT AND MUTTER THRU CORRIDORS OF TIMELESS SPACE... FOREVER!
BUT, THAT IS NOT THE WAY OF HIM WHO HAS THUS ENTRAPPED YOU!
LET ME BUT SHED THIS HUMAN GUISE, AS EASILY AS I SHED YON ROBE--
AND, YOU SHALL SOON FEEL AT FIRST HAND THE AWESOME VENGEANCE OF--
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NIGHTMARE!
LITTLE DID HE KNOW THAT I HAD CROSSED THE BARRIER INTO THE WORLD OF MORTALS··
··THERE TO TAKE THE PLACE OF ONE WHO WAS MOST TRUSTED BY BOTH HIMSELF...AND THE ANCIENT ONE!
AND NOW, HE IS SAFELY IMPRISONED BY MY ARCANE SPELL··
SO THAT I MAY RETURN TO MY CHIMERIC DOMAIN--AND DESTROY HIM AT MY LEISURE!
YET, IF THE PHANTOM FIEND COULD BUT WITNESS WHAT IS TRANSPIRING THERE, HE MIGHT SOON LOSE HIS TASTE FOR LEISURE...
FOR, EVEN THEN, A MYSTIC BATTLE IS TAKING PLACE--AS A HUMAN, YET NOT-HUMAN, SHAPE SEEKS TO ESCAPE FROM THE THROBBING SPHERE··
AND, IN THE NEXT SHATTERING SECOND··
I'M FREE!
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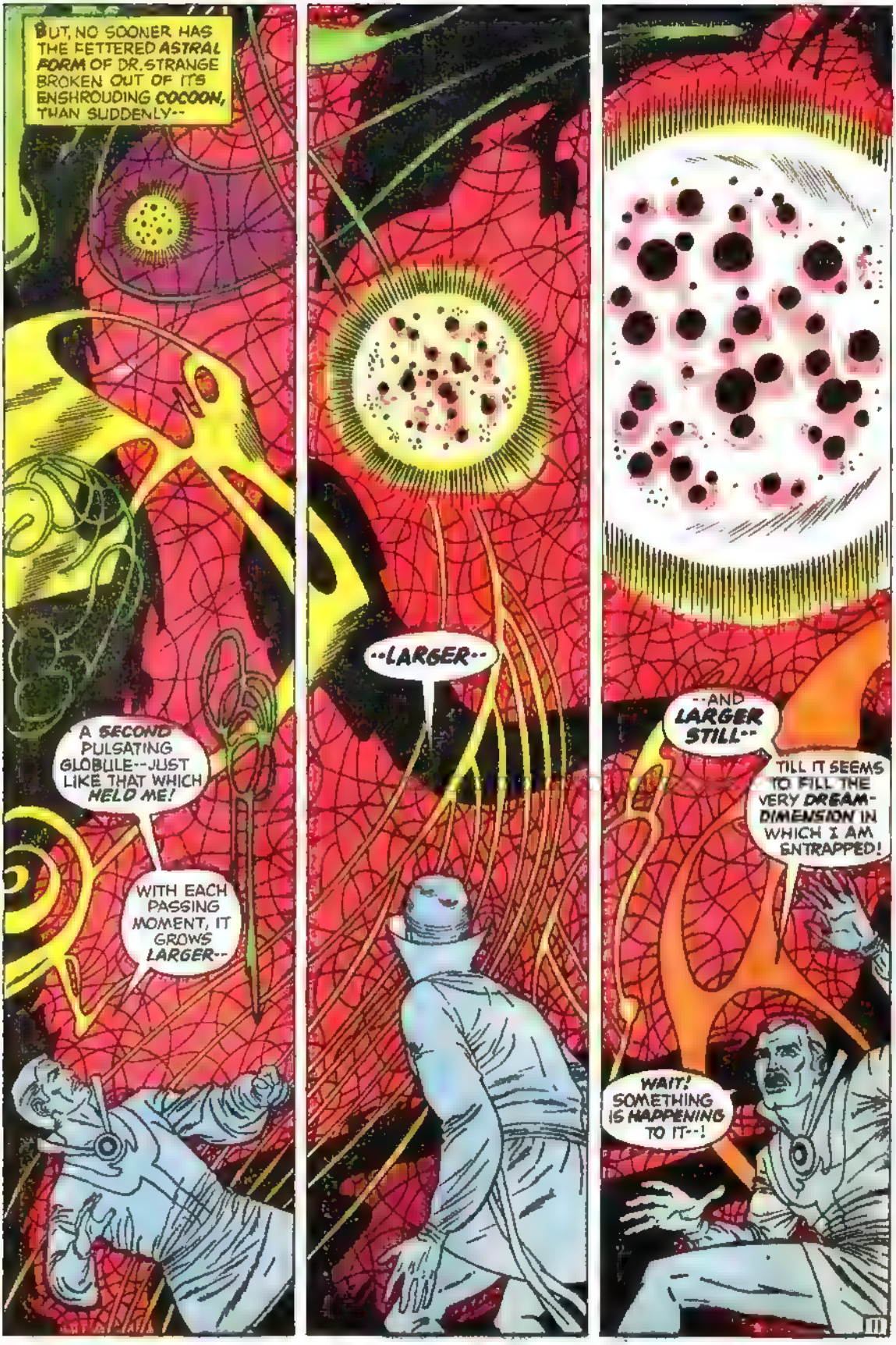
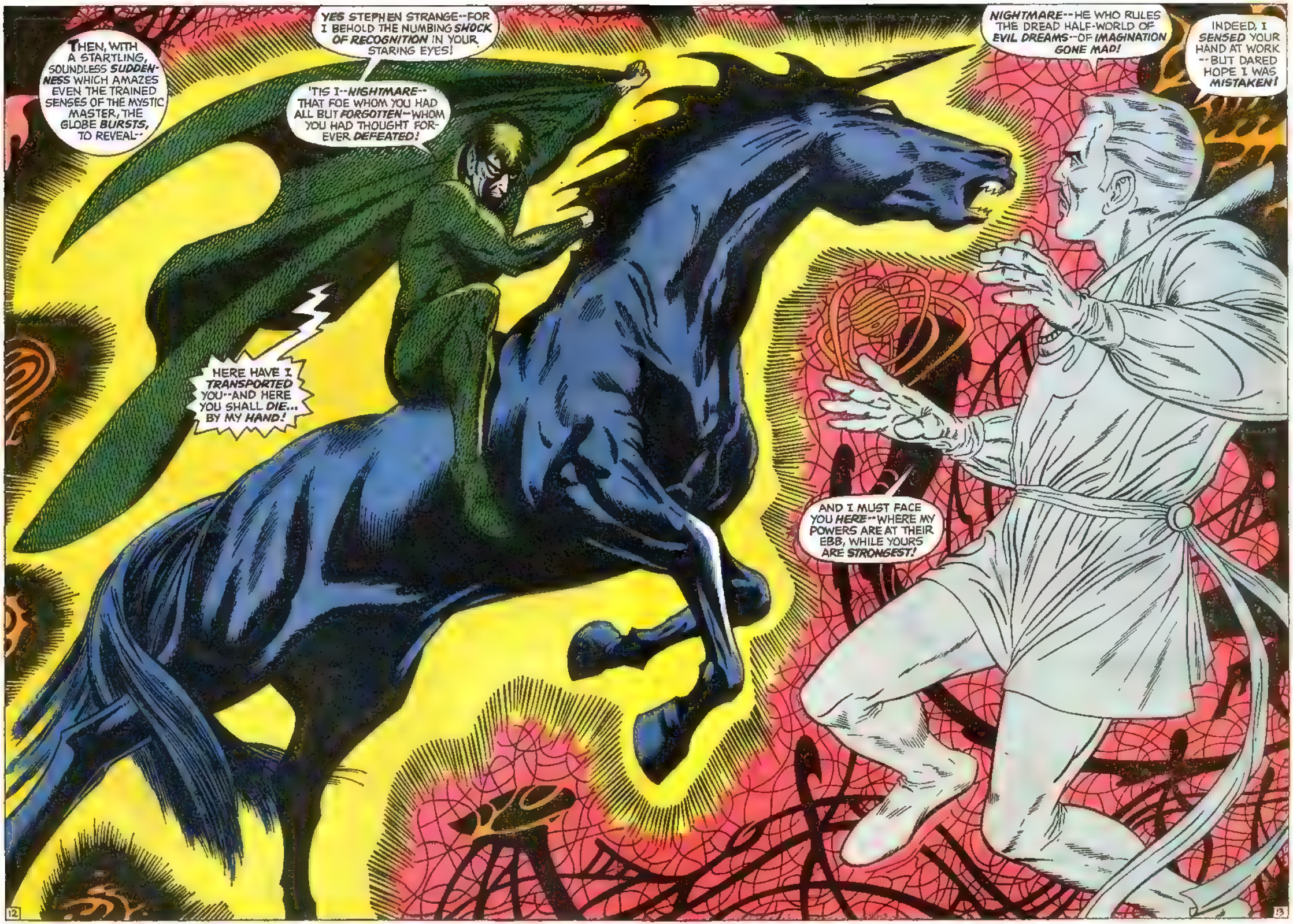

BUT, NO SOONER HAS THE FETTERED ASTRAL FORM OF DR. STRANGE BROKEN OUT OF ITS ENSHROUDING COCOON, THAN SUDDENLY--
A SECOND PULSATING GLOBULE--JUST LIKE THAT WHICH HELD ME!
WITH EACH PASSING MOMENT, IT GROWS LARGER--
--LARGER--
--AND LARGER STILL--
TILL IT SEEMS TO FILL THE VERY DREAM-DIMENSION IN WHICH I AM ENTRAPPED!
WAIT! SOMETHING IS HAPPENING TO IT--!


THEN, WITH A STARTLING, SOUNDLESS SUDDENNESS WHICH AMAZES EVEN THE TRAINED SENSES OF THE MYSTIC MASTER, THE GLOBE BURSTS, TO REVEAL--
YES STEPHEN STRANGE--FOR I BEHOLD THE NUMBING SHOCK OF RECOGNITION IN YOUR STARING EYES!
'TIS I--NIGHTMARE--THAT FOE WHOM YOU HAD ALL BUT FORGOTTEN--WHOM YOU HAD THOUGHT FOREVER DEFEATED!
HERE HAVE I TRANSPORTED YOU--AND HERE YOU SHALL DIE... BY MY HAND!
NIGHTMARE--HE WHO RULES THE DREAD HALF-WORLD OF EVIL DREAMS--OF IMAGINATION GONE MAD!
INDEED, I SENSED YOUR HAND AT WORK--BUT DARED HOPE I WAS MISTAKEN!
AND I MUST FACE YOU HERE--WHERE MY POWERS ARE AT THEIR EBB, WHILE YOURS ARE STRONGEST!
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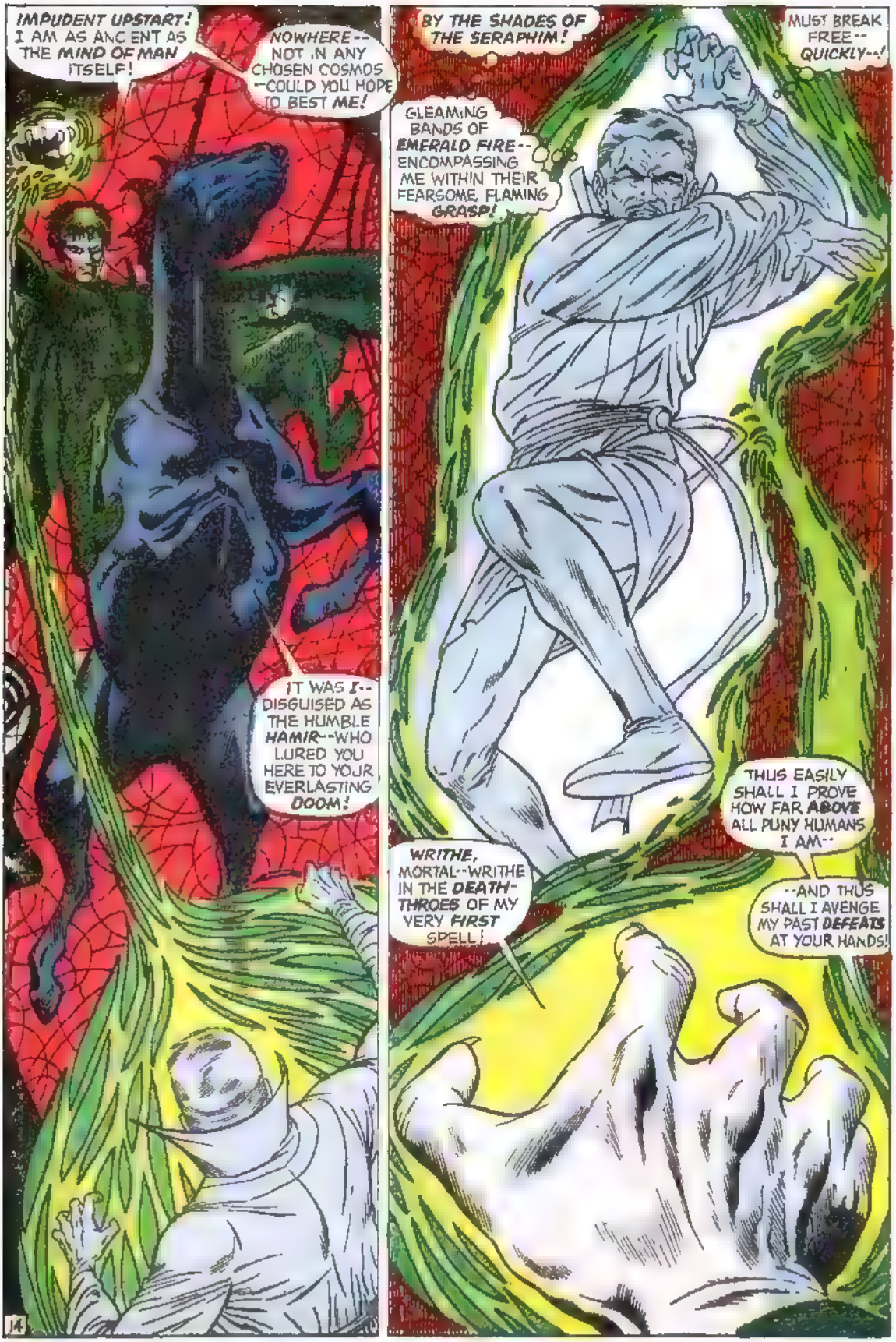
IMPUDENT UPSTART! I AM AS ANCIENT AS THE MIND OF MAN ITSELF!
NOWHERE--NOT IN ANY CHOSEN COSMOS--COULD YOU HOPE TO BEST ME!
IT WAS I--DISGUISED AS THE HUMBLE HAMIR--WHO LURED YOU HERE TO YOUR EVERLASTING DOOM!
BY THE SHADES OF THE SERAPHIM!
MUST BREAK FREE--QUICKLY--!
GLEAMING BANDS OF EMERALD FIRE--ENCOMPASSING ME WITHIN THEIR FEARSOME, FLAMING GRASP!
THUS EASILY SHALL I PROVE HOW FAR ABOVE ALL PUNY HUMANS I AM--
--AND THUS SHALL I AVENGE MY PAST DEFEATS AT YOUR HANDS!
WRITHE, MORTAL--WRITHE IN THE DEATH-THROES OF MY VERY FIRST SPELL!

WITH EACH HEARTBEAT, THE FIRE-BANDS WIND THEMSELVES MORE TIGHTLY ABOUT ME... BECOME MORE PAINFUL TO ENDURE!
PERHAPS... NIGHTMARE SPOKE THE TRUTH..!
SURELY NO MERE MORTAL COULD HOPE TO STAND AGAINST ONE ...WHO IS AGELESS!
YET EVEN AS SUCH NUMBING DOUBTS THREATEN TO CONQUER THE BESIEGED SORCERER, HE LASHES OUT...
NO! I CANNOT-- I DARE NOT ADMIT DEFEAT!
ON ME DEPENDS THE LIFE OF THE ANCIENT ONE-- PERHAPS THE VERY EARTH ITSELF!
I MUST STRIKE BACK--WITH ALL THE POWER GRANTED ME BY THE ALL-KNOWING YISHANTI!
AND, IN THAT INSTANT--
IT IS DONE!
THE DREAD SPELL --IS BROKEN!
BLIND, UNSEEING FOOL!
DID I NOT SAY THAT WAS BUT THE FIRST OF MY MYRIAD INCANTATIONS?
YOU SHALL NOT FIND MY NEXT SPELL SO EASILY OVERCOME!
THUS, BEFORE THE MASTER MAGE CAN RECOVER ENOUGH STRENGTH TO ERECT A NEW PSYCHIC DEFENSE...
HIS MYSTIC BOMBARDMENT HAS SOLIDIFIED MY ASTRAL BODY!
BUT, FOR WHAT DIRE PURPOSE?
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THEN, AS IF IN ANSWER TO THE MORTAL WIZARD'S UNSPOKEN QUESTION...
YOUR CORPOREAL BODY IS NOW VULNERABLE, MORTAL--
--VULNERABLE TO THE DEADLY STING OF MY IMMORTAL STEED!
AND NOW--DIE, DR. STRANGE! DIE!!
HIS EBONY MOUNT IS FULLY AS DANGEROUS AS NIGHTMARE HIMSELF!
ONLY ONE HOPE REMAINS--!
AND, AT THE LAST, DESPERATE SECOND--
AY, CREATURE OF DARKNESS--THE LIGHT OF THE ALL-SEEING EYE OF AGAMOTTO!
WITHIN MY ENCHANTED AMULET LAY THE ONE POWER THAT WOULD DEFEAT BOTH YOU AND YOUR HELL-SPAWNED STALLION!
BY THE DARK DOMAIN OF DORMAMMU!
LIGHT--BLINDING, PULSATING LIGHT! THE ONE THING THAT, ABOVE ALL ELSE, I CANNOT ENDURE!
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NEXT, TO THE ASTONISHMENT OF EVEN DR. STRANGE...
MY STYGIAN STEED FLEES IN STARK PANIC--
--HURLING ME FROM ITS BACK!
BUT, RAISE NOT YOUR VOICE IN VICTORY, MORTAL!
FOR, 'TIS NIGHT-MARE WHO IS THE POWER--NOT HIS MOUNT!
YOUR BOASTS STAND NOW REVEALED AS EMPTY WORDS, FIEND!
SEE HOW YOU ARE DRIVEN BACK --EVER BACK, BY MY AMULET'S AWESOME EYE!
WITHIN MOMENTS, YOU SHALL EXIST NO MORE THAN MAY A SHADOW IN THE BLAZING LIGHT OF NOONDAY!

YOUR WORDS WOULD RESOUND WITH THE RING OF TRUTH, EARTHLING--
--IF I POSSESSED NO MORE WISDOM THAN YOU HAVE POWER!
BUT, THERE IS ONE EVENTUALITY FOR WHICH YOU CANNOT BE PREPARED!
LOOK! LOOK ABOVE YOU--AND DESPAIR!
YET ANOTHER GLOBULE DESCENDS FROM THE WORLD OF THE LIVING!
WHAT NEW ELEMENT CAN IT CONTAIN -- TO INTRODUCE INTO OUR MYSTIC BATTLE?
YOU SHALL SEE, MY DEAR DR. STRANGE-- NOW!
BY THE MANY MOONS OF MUNNOPOR!
THE ASTRAL FORM OF HAMIR-- HE WHOSE IDENTITY YOU TOOK IN YOUR INSANE BID TO ENSNARE ME!
INSANE, MORTAL? HARDLY?
FOR, YON ECTOPLASMIC SHAPE CONTAINS THE VERY LIFE-ESSENCE OF THE ANCIENT ONE'S FAITHFUL ATTENDANT!
I HAVE BUT TO GESTURE--AND HAMIR SHALL LIVE NO MORE!
YET, EVEN AS NIGHTMARE'S VOICED THREAT HANGS IN THE WAITING AIR...
YOU FORGET, EVIL ONE, THAT THE EYE OF AGAMOTTO SHINES WITH THE LIGHT OF TRUTH INCARNATE!
IT REVEALS THAT YOU HAVE BUT CONJURED UP AN IMAGE OF TRUSTED HAMIR--
--HOPING THEREBY TO FORCE ME INTO ABJECT SUBMISSION!

NO ANSWER DO I HEAR FROM YOUR TREACHEROUS LIPS, NIGHTMARE!
IT CAN ONLY BE--BECAUSE I HAVE GUESSED YOUR COWARDLY SECRET!
BUT THEN AS DR. STRANGE TURNS TO FACE HIS FEARSOME FOE, HE SEES--
NIGHTMARE IS GONE! NAUGHT BUT HIS PSYCHIC SHELL REMAINS!
HE HAS RETURNED TO THE WORLD OF WAKEFULNESS--WHILE HIS ORIGINAL SPELL HOLDS ME HERE!
IF I DO NOT ACT AT ONCE--WE ARE ALL UNDONE!
AND, THE MYSTIC MASTER HAS SURMISED CORRECTLY--FOR, AT THAT PRECISE MOMENT, IN THE CHAMBER OF THE ANCIENT ONE...
I WAS A FOOL TO FACE THE MORTAL ON EQUAL TERMS--WHERE HE HAD ANY GLIMMERING HOPE OF SUCCESS!
NOW, I MUST QUICKLY END THIS CHARADE--WITH BUT A SIMPLE DAGGER!
WHEN HIS SLEEPING MENTOR DIES, DR. STRANGE WILL BE LIKEWISE DESTROYED!!
HOWEVER, THE NEXT SECOND, WITH THE SPEED OF TIMELESS THOUGHT ITSELF...
THE MAGICIAN'S CLOAK OF LEVITATION--IT WRAPS ITSELF ABOUT ME!
BUT HOW--HOW??

THEN, FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE DREAD DREAM-DIMENSION, COMES THE AWESOME RESPONSE...
IT OBEYS MY OCCULT COMMANDS LIKE A THING ALIVE!
THOUGH WE BE SEPARATED BY MORE THAN A WORLD—AY, BY MORE THAN A UNIVERSE--
STILL MY ENCHANTED CLOAK AND I ARE EVER AS ONE!
THE INFERNAL CLOAK PREVENTS ME FROM SEEING--FROM CASTING SPELLS!
IN ITS IRRESISTIBLE GRIP--I AM HELPLESS!
MUST CONTINUE MY MYSTIC BOMBARDMENT WITHOUT PAUSE!
A MOMENT'S HESITATION--A SECOND'S FALTERING--AND WE ARE DOOMED!
I MUST FADE INTO MY OWN WORLD--WHERE STILL I AM SUPREME!
AND EVEN BEFORE THE ECHOES OF NIGHTMARE'S CRY HAVE FADED IN THE GLOOM...
WHEN MY ENEMY FLED INTO THE ANCIENT ONE'S DREAM, I SEIZED THE CHANCE TO BREAK FREE!
NOW, IF ONLY I CAN AWAKEN MY MENTOR--AFTER RETURNING TO MY PHYSICAL BODY--
ALMOST AT ONCE, TO THE MAGE'S GREAT RELIEF...
MASTER--AT LEAST YOU ARE AROUSED FROM YOUR SINISTER SLEEP!
HOW CAN I TELL YOU OF THE MENACE SO NARROWLY AVERTED—?
THERE IS NO NEED... MY SON!
I WAS NOT SO HELPLESS... AS NIGHTMARE IMAGINED!
THEN—YOU ALLOWED HIM TO ENTER THE WORLD OF MORTALS THRU YOUR MIND? BUT WHY—?
OF LATE, MY SON, YOU HAVE BEEN PLAGUED BY NUMBING DOUBTS!
ONLY A VICTORY OVER A POWERFUL FOE COULD FULLY RESTORE YOUR CONFIDENCE!
THUS, I RISKED BOTH OUR LIVES--IN THE MOST FATEFUL GAMBIT OF ALL!
THE VISHANTI BE PRAISED...YOU PROVED EQUAL TO THE TEST!
THEN, AS DR. STRANGE TURNS TO LEAVE...
I ENTERED THIS CHAMBER A MAN--AMONG MANY MEN!
BUT, I DEPART ONCE MORE--THE MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS!
NEXT: CLEA LIVES!